
Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program



Understanding 2007 STAR Program Tests

Information for School District and School Staff

- What's New in 2007
- Questions and Answer Documents
- Glossary of Terms

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Purpose

Educating students requires a team effort that actively involves educators, parents and guardians, and students in the learning process. To effectively carry out this shared responsibility, every member of that team must have a common understanding about the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program and the role it plays in ensuring that all students achieve California's content standards for core subject areas.

The purpose of *Understanding 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for School District and School Staff* is to help local administrators work with their teachers and support staff to make sure they have the basic information they need to:

- Communicate effectively about the STAR Program with parents and guardians and students.
- Report and use results of each STAR Program test to help monitor the academic progress of students and schools.

Assistance materials in this packet are for use by school district and school administrators to prepare teachers and support staff for their roles as key communicators. The packet includes information about key changes in the 2007 STAR Program and answers to commonly asked questions about the STAR Program and each of its tests.

Uses of Information and Materials

All of the assistance materials have been prepared for a variety of uses with various audiences. For example, the "What's New in 2007" update can be copied by the school district or school test coordinator and shared with principals at a management team meeting. Those principals in turn can share this information at a weekly faculty meeting. Principals can use the assistance materials to update parent leaders who also carry a major role as key communicators. The "Suggested Uses of Information and Materials Chart" on page 5 describes each document included in the packet, its available electronic formats, language versions, and some suggested uses.

A second assistance packet, *Communicating with Parents and Guardians About 2007 STAR Program Tests: Resources for Use by School District and School Staff*, provides camera-ready copies of newsletter inserts and sample parent letters with attachments for school district and/or school administrators to duplicate for distribution to parents and guardians. A third packet, *Guides for 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for Parents and Guardians*, provides parent/guardian guides and a brochure that administrators can duplicate as handouts for parent/guardian information meetings. Parents and guardians also can be encouraged to view the materials in this packet directly via the Internet. A “Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms for Assessment and Accountability” also is provided at the end of each packet. All three packets are posted on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

Special Focus Areas

Some assistance material in this packet is designed to prepare staff for communicating with the parents and guardians of English learners and students with disabilities. This material with page references is listed in the table of contents.

Suggested Uses of Information and Materials Chart

Document	Description	Suggested Uses
What's New in 2007 Available Format: English version	Provides a summary of the key changes in the STAR Program for administration in spring 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share information with staff and distribute copies at staff meetings, in staff mailboxes, and at grade-level and/or department meetings. ■ Provide copies for administrators, teachers, and parent leaders to use in preparing for conferences and other meetings with parents and guardians. ■ Post copies in the main school office or on staff bulletin boards.
Question and Answer Documents Available Formats: Text file English version	Six question and answer documents provide answers to questions frequently asked by staff, parents, and guardians about the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2007 STAR Program: Overview ■ California Standards Test ■ STAR Program Tests for English Learners ■ California Alternate Performance Assessment ■ Early Assessment Program ■ California Reading List 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share information with staff and distribute copies at staff meetings, in staff mailboxes, and at grade-level and/or department meetings (also share with non-certificated staff members). ■ Provide copies for administrators, teachers, and parent leaders to use in preparing for school district and school advisory group and site council meetings, information nights, and conferences and other meetings with parents and guardians. ■ Post copies in the main school office or on staff bulletin boards.

Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

What's New in 2007

New Tests for English Learners In Grades Two, Three, and Four

- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for reading-language arts and mathematics become STAR's designated primary language test (DPLT) in grades two, three, and four. Questions for the new STS are based on state content standards for the subject areas tested. The STS replaces the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3) as the DPLT in those three grades. The STS also will replace the Aprenda 3 as the DPLT at other grades levels as the new tests are developed. The State Board of Education (SBE) approved the blueprints for the development of the STS for grades five through seven in July 2006. Blueprints for the STS in grades two through seven currently are available at the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/stsblueprints.asp>.
- State law (*Education Code* Section 60640) requires all Spanish-speaking English learners, who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months or who receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), to take the DPLT in addition to the tests in the STAR Program administered in English.

Revised California Alternate Performance Assessment Scheduled for Spring 2008

- The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is currently being revised to be more closely linked to selected grade-level content standards. The revised CAPA is scheduled to become operational in 2008. Performance level setting for the revised CAPA will occur in 2007–08, using field test results from spring 2007. Blueprints for the revised CAPA are on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capablueprints.asp>.

No Below-Grade-Level Testing

- Reminder: Beginning with the 2006 administration, below-grade-level testing is no longer allowed. All individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans should be reviewed by school districts to remove any below-level testing.

End-of-Course California Standards Tests

- Students in grade seven may now take the California Standards Test (CST) in Algebra I. Grade seven students will take *either* the grade seven CST in mathematics found in the CST booklet or, if they complete an Algebra I course during the 2006–07 school year, the CST in Algebra I.
- The CST in World History is now an end-of-course test and may be taken in grades nine, ten, or eleven. Students in grade ten who took a World History course in grade nine in 2005–06 may take the CST in World History this spring. This special allowance is needed only for the 2007 administration to phase in the new eligibility guidelines.

Released CST Questions

- Released CST questions from the 2006 administration are posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. Released questions are to be used in conjunction with the *Guidelines on Academic Preparation for State Assessments*. These guidelines are posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.
- Teacher guides for the 2006 California Writing Standards Tests in grades four and seven are posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. These guides include the prompts, sample student work, teacher commentaries, and scoring rubrics from the spring 2006 administration.

Questions and Answers About the 2007 STAR Program: Overview

What is the STAR Program?

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is an important part of the state assessment system. Administered annually in the spring in grades two through eleven, the STAR Program was first authorized in 1997 and reauthorized until 2011 by state law (*Education Code* Section 60640). Tests in the STAR Program measure how well students in California public schools are learning the knowledge and skills identified in the California content standards. The STAR Program for 2007 includes five test components:

- The **California Standards Tests (CSTs)** measure the achievement of state content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, science, and history-social science.
- The **California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition (CAT/6 Survey)** are nationally norm-referenced tests that measure the achievement of general academic knowledge in core subject areas and provide national comparisons (for grades three and seven only).
- The **California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)** was developed as an alternate assessment for students who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications.
- The **Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)** have been developed for Spanish-speaking English learners and measure the achievement of state content standards in reading-language arts and mathematics in Spanish (for grades two, three, and four in 2007).
- The **Apr enda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Apr enda 3)** is a nationally norm-referenced achievement test of general academic knowledge in Spanish for Spanish-speaking English learners (for grades five through eleven in 2007).

Who takes the tests in the STAR Program?

All students in grades two through eleven participate in the STAR Program, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners.

In addition to the tests administered in English, all Spanish-speaking English learners, who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12 months or who receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), must take the designated primary language test (DPLT) (*Education Code* Section 60640). For spring 2007, the DPLT is the STS in grades two, three, and four and the Aprenda 3 in grades five through eleven.

Only students whose parents or guardians have submitted written requests to exempt them from STAR Program testing do not take any tests (*Education Code* Section 60615).

What is done to assist students with disabilities?

Most students with disabilities take the tests in the STAR Program along with all other students under standard conditions. Some students with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the tests. These are listed in the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The IEPs for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs or CAT/6 Survey even with accommodations or modifications specify that they are to take the CAPA. All students are required to take the test for the grade level in which they are enrolled.

Will below-grade-level testing be allowed for the spring 2007 administration?

No. Below-grade-level testing is not allowed. All IEPs should be reviewed in every school district to ensure that any below-grade-level testing has been removed.

What is done to assist students who are English learners?

English learners may use English-to-primary language translation glossaries or word lists that do not include definitions or formulas and are regularly used in the classroom. This assistance may be provided

for all subjects except English-language arts on the CSTs and may not be provided in any subject area on the CAT/6 Survey. English learners may have test directions translated for them and ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CSTs and the CAT/6 Survey. English learners also may be tested separately if such a setting is part of the regular classroom instruction or assessments. The variations allowed for English learners are listed on the last page of the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, which is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

When do parents or guardians get their student's results?

Student STAR Program results must be reported to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district receives them from the testing contractor. STAR Program reports usually are mailed by the school district to each student's home.

Can results from the STAR Program be used to determine if a student should be retained?

A school district may use STAR Program results to help make decisions about student placement, promotion, retention, or other considerations related to student achievement. These test scores should never be used by themselves to make such important decisions. School districts also should consider local assessments, classroom tests, grades, and teacher recommendations in making these decisions.

Note: Parents or guardians should be reminded that individual student results are confidential and maintained only by the school district. The CDE does not keep individual student results and, therefore, cannot respond to parent or guardian requests for their student's results.

Can parents or guardians excuse their student from the tests in the STAR Program?

Yes. *Education Code* Section 60615 allows a parent or guardian to excuse his or her student from the tests in the STAR Program. This request must be made in writing and submitted prior to the first day of testing. In addition, the request may specify:

- The test(s) from which the student is to be exempted (i.e., all or some tests).
- The length of time that the parent or guardian request remains in effect (i.e., current year or longer).

Can parents or guardians see the tests in the STAR Program?

No. By law (*Education Code* Section 60616) the tests in the STAR Program are secure tests and cannot be seen by anyone other than the parties specified by law (i.e., school board members, legislators). This stipulation helps maintain the integrity of the tests and ensures that the rights of all students are protected. A portion of the test questions used in the CSTs is released each year and posted on the Internet for public viewing. The released questions show the content and types of questions that are included in the CST portion of the STAR Program. These released questions are available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

Do STAR Program test results go on a student's high school transcript?

No. Student results for tests in the STAR Program do not go on the high school transcript unless a parent or guardian signs a release or submits a written request to the school or school district to do so. Students, parents, or guardians may authorize the release of individual student results to colleges or universities for the purpose of credit, placement, or admission (*Education Code* Section 60641).

How can schools help prepare students for the tests in the STAR Program?

The best way to prepare students for the tests in the STAR Program is to provide classroom instruction and tests that are aligned to the California content standards. Teachers are encouraged to talk with their students' parents or guardians about what the school district, school, and teachers are doing to make sure the content standards are being taught and tested.

Questions and Answers About the California Standards Tests

Grade Levels, Subject Areas, and Test Format

What grade levels and subject areas are tested on the CSTs?

The California Standards Tests (CSTs) are an important component of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Developed exclusively for California's public schools, CSTs are designed to measure how well students are achieving state-adopted content standards in core subject areas. Answers to commonly asked questions about the grade levels and subject areas tested and the content and format of the CSTs are provided below. Basic information about the CSTs and other STAR Program tests can be found in the *Questions and Answers About the 2007 STAR Program: Overview* on pages 8 through 11. Changes in the CSTs for the spring 2007 administration are noted in *What's New in 2007* on page 6. Content standards addressed on the CSTs are available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>.

Students take two, three, four, or five CSTs depending on their grade level or the courses they are taking. The CSTs are given for the following subject areas at each grade level:

- Grades two, three, four, six, and seven
 - English-language arts*
 - Mathematics
- Grade five
 - English-language arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
- Grades eight, nine, and eleven
 - English-language arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - History-social science

*Students in grades four and seven also complete a writing task as part of the CST in English-language arts.

What content is tested on the CSTs?

- Grade ten
 - English-language arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science** □
 - History-social science

There are three kinds of CSTs, which are all based on state content standards. First, there are CSTs that are based on content standards from a specific grade level and subject area such as grade two mathematics and grade ten English-language arts. Second, there are CSTs administered at the secondary level that are based on content standards from specific courses such as Chemistry and Geometry. These are often referred to as the end-of-course CSTs. Third, there are CSTs that cover selected subject-area content standards from multiple-grade levels. Two examples are the Grade Five Science CST, which covers science content standards from grades four and five, and the Grade Eight History-Social Science CST, which covers history-social science content standards from grades six, seven, and eight.

What subject areas have end-of-course CSTs?

Mathematics, science, and history-social science are the three subject areas that have end-of-course CSTs.

What are the end-of-course CSTs in mathematics?

There are six end-of-course CSTs in mathematics. Students in grades seven through eleven take an end-of-course CST in mathematics according to the following guidelines:

- The CST in Algebra I is for students in grades seven through eleven who are completing Algebra I. This CST is based on state content standards for Algebra I.
- The CST in Geometry or the CST in Algebra II are for students in grades eight through eleven who are completing the respective mathematics course. These CSTs are based on the content standards for Geometry or Algebra II, respectively.
- The CSTs in Integrated Mathematics 1, Integrated Mathematics 2, or Integrated Mathematics 3 are for students in grades eight through eleven who are completing the respective integrated mathematics course. These CSTs are based on selected combinations of content standards from Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.

** Most grade ten students take two science CSTs.

In addition to the six end-of-course CSTs noted on the previous page, there are two mathematics CSTs administered at the completion of specific courses as follows:

- The General Mathematics CST is for students in grades eight and nine who are not enrolled in or completing a standards-based mathematics course designated for these grades. For example, grade eight students who are completing the first year of a two-year Algebra I course take the General Mathematics CST. The General Mathematics CST is based on content standards for grades six and seven.
- The Summative High School Mathematics CST is for the following two categories of students:
 - Students in grades nine and ten who completed Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics 3 during a previous school year or the first block for students on block schedule. These students will take the Summative High School Mathematics CST each year through grade eleven.
 - Students in grade eleven who completed Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics 3 any time prior to the beginning of STAR Program testing. This includes students in grade eleven who are taking higher mathematics courses or no mathematics courses.

What are the end-of-course CSTs in science?

There are a total of eight end-of-course CSTs in science. There are four end-of-course CSTs in science that are based on the content standards for Earth Sciences, Biology/Life Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics respectively. In addition, there are four end-of-course CSTs for integrated/coordinated science that are based on selected combinations of the content standards for Earth Sciences, Biology/Life Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics. Only students completing one of the standards-based science courses listed above take one of the appropriate CSTs in science.

Which CSTs in science are required for grade ten students?

Grade ten students are required to take the Grade Ten California Life Science Standards Test. This test covers selected content standards from middle school life sciences and high school biology. In addition to this test, most grade ten students take a CST in science for the course they completed during the summer session or are completing that school year.

What is the end-of-course CST in history-social science?

The end-of-course CST in history-social science is for World History. This CST may be taken in grade nine, ten, or eleven.

What question formats are found on the CSTs?

Questions for all of the CSTs, except for the writing tasks in grades four and seven, are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices. Students mark their answer choices in the test booklet for grades two and three and on an answer document for grades four through eleven. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored. Released CST questions from prior administrations are posted for public viewing on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

For the CST in English-language arts, students in grades four and seven respond to multiple-choice questions and write an essay in response to a writing task or prompt. The score on the writing task is combined with the results of the multiple-choice questions to produce an overall score and the performance level for the CST in English-language arts. Writing guides for grades four and seven are posted for public viewing on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

What standards are addressed by the writing tasks in grades four and seven?

The writing tasks in grades four and seven address the writing applications strand from the state content standards in English-language arts.

In grade four, students are required to produce one of three types of writing: a narrative (story), a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature. In grade seven, students are required to produce one of four types of writing: a fictional narrative (story), a persuasive letter or essay, a summary of a reading passage, or a response to literature.

Where can I see sample questions from the CSTs?

Sample questions from previous CSTs and writing tasks for grades four and seven are available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program and the CSTs is available from the STAR Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Questions and Answers About the STAR Program Tests for English Learners

Standards-based Tests in Spanish and Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición

Are all English learners required to participate in the STAR Program?

Yes. Under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and state law, all students, including English learners, are required to participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. All English learners, regardless of their primary language, are required to take the STAR Program tests administered in English. This includes the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and, in grades three and seven only, the California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey).

Spanish-speaking English learners also are required to take the designated primary language test (DPLT) in Spanish.

What is done to assist English learners on the STAR Program tests administered in English?

English learners may use English-to-primary language translation glossaries or word lists that do not include definitions or formulas and are regularly used in the classroom. This assistance may be provided for all subjects except English-language arts on the CSTs and may not be provided in any subject area on the CAT/6 Survey. They also may have test directions translated for them and ask clarifying questions in their primary language for all subjects tested on the CSTs and CAT/6 Survey. Students who are English learners may be tested separately if such a setting is part of the regular classroom instruction or assessments. The variations allowed for English learners are listed on the last page of the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

What is the designated primary language test?

The DPLT is part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. In spring 2007, the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) are the DPLT to be administered to eligible English learners in grades two, three, and four. In grades five through eleven, the DPLT to be administered to eligible English learners is the Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3).

Which English learners are eligible to take the DPLT?

All Spanish-speaking English learners in grades two through eleven, who have been enrolled in a school in the United States for less than 12

	<p>months or who receive instruction in Spanish (regardless of how long they have been in school in the United States), must take the DPLT for their respective grade level (<i>Education Code</i> Section 60640). School districts may also choose to administer the DPLT to any other Spanish-speaking English learners. English learners who take the DPLT also take the CSTs and CAT/6 Survey, which are administered in English. The STAR Program does not include DPLTs for English learners who speak primary languages other than Spanish.</p>
<i>Why are two different tests administered as the DPLT?</i>	<p>Currently, the DPLT involves two different tests because the CDE is transitioning from the Aprenda 3 to the STS. This transition begins in spring 2007 with grades two, three, and four. Over the next two years, the STS will be phased in and replace the Aprenda 3 as the DPLT for grades five through eleven.</p> <p>The STS is a standards-based test developed exclusively for California public schools. It is based on California content standards in reading-language arts and mathematics. Unlike the STS, the Aprenda 3 is a published norm-referenced achievement test of general academic knowledge in Spanish that is not explicitly based on California content standards. The STS, therefore, will allow Spanish-speaking English learners to demonstrate achievement of the California content standards.</p>
<i>When are the STS and Aprenda 3 to be given in spring 2007?</i>	<p>School districts are required to give the STS during the same 21-day window established for the CSTs and the CAT/6 Survey (grades three and seven only). Within this window, the STS may be administered before or after the CSTs. School districts are required to schedule the administration of the Aprenda 3 between March 15 and May 14, 2007. Most school districts give the Aprenda 3 prior to the administration of other 2007 STAR Program tests.</p>
<i>How much time are students given to take the STS or the Aprenda 3?</i>	<p>The STS and Aprenda 3 are not timed tests. School districts are provided with recommended times for students to complete each test, which vary by grade level and subject area. Students who are actively working on a test at the end of the recommended time must be allowed more time to complete the test.</p>
<i>Can parents or guardians see the STS or Aprenda 3?</i>	<p>No. <i>Education Code</i> Section 60616 states that all of the tests in the STAR Program, which includes the STS and Aprenda 3, are secure and cannot be seen by anyone other than the students who take the tests and the parties specified by law such as school board members and legislators.</p>

What is done to assist English learners with disabilities?

Most English learners with disabilities who take the CSTs, STS, or Aprenda 3 take the test along with other students under standard conditions. Some English learners with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the CSTs, STS, or Aprenda 3. These are listed in the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, which is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.

What question formats are found on the STS and Aprenda 3?

Questions for all of the STS and Aprenda 3 tests are in a multiple-choice format. Students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four possible choices on the STS or from four or five possible choices on the Aprenda 3. Students in grades two and three mark their answer choices in the test booklet. All other students mark their answer choices only on a separate answer document. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored.

When do parents or guardians receive their student's STS or Aprenda 3 student reports?

As required for all tests in the STAR Program, student reports for the STS or Aprenda 3 must be distributed to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district receives them. STS and Aprenda 3 student reports should arrive in most school districts by the end of August. The student reports for these two tests will be provided in Spanish.

Note: Parents or guardians should be reminded that individual student results are confidential and maintained only by the school district. The CDE does not keep individual student results and, therefore, cannot respond to parent or guardian requests for their student's results.

What information will be included on the STS or Aprenda 3 student report?

The STS student report will provide results that describe how well students achieved identified state content standards for reading-language arts and mathematics. The STS report will provide scores for each subject area. For 2007, only percent correct will be reported. Standard setting will occur in fall 2007, and performance levels will be recommended at that time. The Aprenda 3 student report will include score information for each subject area of the test (i.e., reading, mathematics, language, and spelling).

***How are STS or
Aprenda 3 results used to
help students achieve in
school?***

The results in the STS or Aprenda 3 student report provide information that may be used with other achievement data, including the results on the CSTs, to identify Spanish-speaking English learners' academic strengths and areas that need improvement. Parents or guardians should review areas of concern with their student's teachers to discuss specific help needed to improve learning.

The STS or Aprenda 3 student report is one source of information about the progress Spanish-speaking English learners are making in school. Parents, guardians, and teachers should also review grades, classroom work, and the results from other classroom and standardized tests for a more complete picture of each student's academic progress.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STS, Aprenda 3, or other tests in the STAR Program is available from the STAR Program Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Questions and Answers About the California Alternate Performance Assessment

What is the CAPA?

The California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is an alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the California Standards Tests (CSTs) even with accommodations or modifications. The CAPA was added to the STAR Program in 2003 to ensure that all California students could participate in statewide assessments.

Who are students with “significant cognitive disabilities”?

Generally, students with “significant cognitive disabilities” refers to a small number of students whose intellectual and adaptive capabilities are far below those of typical students at the same grade or age level. Students with significant cognitive disabilities require intensive support and services that may be provided in a regular or special classroom. The services and support are designed to help these students learn skills that could be used in a variety of settings in the student’s life such as school, home, or career. Even with the best instruction and teachers, students with significant cognitive disabilities may never reach grade-level standards.

Must all students take the CSTs or the CAPA?

Yes. All students enrolled in grades two through eleven are required to participate in the STAR Program by taking either the CSTs or the CAPA. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are in ungraded programs also take the CAPA.

What is an “ungraded” program?

Generally, “ungraded” programs for students with disabilities involve placing students of different ages in the same classroom without a grade-level designation.

How do schools determine if a student takes the CAPA and what level of the CAPA he or she takes?

Each student’s individualized education program (IEP) team determines if a student will take the CAPA and what level of the CAPA he or she takes. That determination must be specified in the student’s IEP. The CAPA has five levels. Most students eligible for the CAPA take the level that corresponds to their grade placement.

What are the five CAPA levels offered?

The five CAPA levels are as follows:

- Level I — grades two through eleven for students with complex, profound disabilities
- Level II — grades two and three
- Level III — grades four and five
- Level IV — grades six through eight
- Level V — grades nine through eleven

What subject areas will be assessed by the CAPA in 2007?

For the 2007 administration, students will be assessed in English-language arts and mathematics. Students taking the CAPA in grades five, eight, and ten also will participate in a field test of science performance tasks. The CAPA is aligned to selected California content standards that are appropriate for students taking the CAPA.

Who administers the CAPA?

A certificated or licensed member of the school staff who has been trained in CAPA testing procedures administers the CAPA.

How are CAPA questions asked?

The CAPA is administered individually. The examiner asks the student to perform a task, observes the performance, and scores and records the performance according to a specific scoring guide. There is a standard process for checking consistency in scoring at each school.

How are the CAPA results reported?

The reporting process for the CAPA is much like the process used for other tests within the STAR Program. School districts receive STAR student reports (CAPA version) for distribution to parents and guardians and school and school district reports for use by school district and school staffs. In addition to the individual reports, group CAPA results for schools, school districts, counties, and the state are posted annually on the CDE Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov>.

Note: Parents and guardians should be reminded that student scores are maintained only by the school district. The CDE does not keep student scores and cannot respond to parent or guardian requests for their student's scores.

What results will be reported for the 2007 CAPA?

CAPA reports for the 2007 administration will show how well students performed according to selected California content standards in English-language arts and mathematics. Results will show the student's CAPA scale score and performance level for each subject area tested. The State Board of Education (SBE) established five performance levels for reporting CAPA results: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic.

Will there be changes to the CAPA in 2008?

Yes. The CAPA is currently being revised to be more closely linked to grade-level content standards. The revised CAPA is scheduled to become operational in 2008. Performance level setting for the revised CAPA will occur in 2007–08, using field test results from spring 2007. Blueprints for the revised CAPA are on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/capablueprints.asp>.

How are CAPA results used?

Using CAPA Results

CAPA results are used in many important ways. The IEP team—including teachers, administrators, parents and guardians, and support staff—uses CAPA results to help monitor each student's academic progress. These results also are used to determine if students should take the CAPA or the CSTs in subsequent years. Individual student results are combined to prepare grade-level reports by subject for each school, school district, county, and the state. These results are used with other information about student achievement to help make decisions about ways to improve student learning and school programs. The CAPA scores are also used, with results of other state tests, to meet state and federal school accountability requirements.

Additional Information

Additional information about the STAR Program and the CAPA is available from the STAR Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Questions and Answers About the Early Assessment Program

What is the Early Assessment Program?

The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is the result of collaboration between the California Department of Education (CDE), State Board of Education (SBE), and California State University (CSU). The EAP, developed to align the competencies required of incoming college freshmen to the state content standards in English-language arts and mathematics for kindergarten through grade twelve, is voluntary and is offered at all California public high schools for grade eleven students only.

How can a student participate in the EAP?

Participation is voluntary and does not require any separate registration procedure. Students in grade eleven may participate in the EAP in English (Early Assessment of Readiness for College English) by completing the 15 additional multiple-choice questions included in the test booklet at the end of the section for the Grade Eleven California English-Language Arts Standards Test (CST in English-language arts). A written essay also is required for the EAP in English. Students in grade eleven who take the CSTs in Algebra II or Summative High School Mathematics may participate in the EAP in mathematics (Early Assessment of Readiness for College Mathematics). These students participate by completing 15 additional multiple-choice questions that are at the end of the test booklets for these CSTs. Students in grade twelve are not eligible to participate in the EAP. The EAP in English consists of a portion of the grade eleven CSTs in English-language arts, the 15 additional EAP questions at the end of the test booklet and the written essay. The EAP in mathematics consists of the CST end-of-course Algebra II or Summative High School Mathematics tests and the 15 additional EAP questions at the end of the test booklet.

Where can students get samples of the EAP multiple-choice questions and writing tasks?

Sample questions and more information on both EAP tests are found in the following online documents located at the sites listed:

CSU's English Success Web site at <http://www.csuenglishsuccess.org>

CSU's Math Success Web site at <http://www.csumathsuccess.org>

Focus on English at <http://www.calstate.edu/eap/documents/ept.pdf>

Focus on Mathematics at <http://www.calstate.edu/eap/documents/fom.pdf>

How are the results for the EAP reported?

Sample EAP writing tasks, the scoring rubric, and sample student essays for the tasks are included in *Focus on English*.

The EAP results are reported separately for English (English-language arts) and mathematics.

EAP in English

Results of the EAP in English are based on the 15 EAP multiple-choice questions, selected questions from the grade eleven CST in English-Language Arts, and the EAP essay. These combined results are reported in two ways:

Ready for CSU College-level English Courses: This indicates that the student scored high enough to be exempt from taking the CSU English Placement Test (EPT).

Not Yet Demonstrating Readiness for CSU College-level English Courses: The student did not score high enough to be exempt from the EPT and needs additional instruction in grade twelve to prepare for the EPT and college-level English.

EAP in Mathematics

Results of the EAP in mathematics are based on the 15 EAP multiple-choice questions and selected questions from the CST in Algebra II or the CST in Summative High School Mathematics. These combined results are reported in three ways:

Ready for CSU College-level Mathematics Courses: This indicates that the student scored high enough to be exempt from taking the CSU Entry Level Mathematics (ELM) placement test.

Ready for CSU College-level Mathematics Courses – Conditional: This indicates that by successfully completing an approved mathematics experience in grade twelve the student may be exempt from the ELM. If the student does not do any additional coursework and is not exempt on the basis of college admissions tests (i.e., SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement) the student will have to take and pass the ELM.

What are approved experiences for students in the grade twelve who receive a Ready for College-Level Mathematics Courses – Conditional status on the EAP in mathematics?

How do students get their EAP results?

How will the CSU get the information about a student's EAP results?

Not Yet Demonstrating Readiness for CSU College-level

Mathematics Courses: The student did not score high enough to be exempt from the ELM and needs additional instruction in grade twelve to prepare for the ELM and college-level mathematics.

A description of approved experiences for students in grade twelve who receive a Ready for College-Level Mathematics Courses – Conditional status in mathematics is available through the Math Success Web site at <http://www.csumathsuccess.org>. Students must enroll in and successfully complete (i.e., grade C or better, unless otherwise specified) one of these experiences during their senior year or the summer following graduation.

Beginning in 2007, the EAP results will be included on the STAR Student Report. It will be located in the bottom left hand corner on the back page of the report.

In addition to the paper reports sent to the student, students who have applied to the CSU via the CSU Mentor Web site can access their EAP status on-line. This Web site can be found through a link on the CSU English Success Web site (<http://www.csuenglishsuccess.org>) or the CSU Math Success Web site (<http://www.csumathsuccess.org>).

Students who complete the EAP in English and/or mathematics and apply to a CSU will be responsible for having their EAP results included on transcripts sent to that CSU.

For More Information About the EAP...

Students, parents, or guardians are advised to get more information about the EAP by logging on to <http://www.calstate.edu/eap/>. The following information also is included at that site:

- Materials to prepare students for the EAP
- State content standards tested on the EAP
- Sample writing tasks, scoring guides, and sample student essays
- EAP support

Questions and Answers About the California Reading List

What is the California Reading List?

The California Reading List (CRL) is a Web-based tool that allows students and their parents or guardians to access lists of book titles organized by levels of reading difficulty. A CRL number identifies the list of books that may be appropriate for a student's independent reading level. Each list includes books that cover a range of subjects, interests, and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, plays, poetry).

Where can teachers and parents or guardians find the CRL number for their students?

The CRL number is included on the STAR Student Report that is sent to parents and guardians annually with individual results of the California Standards Tests (CSTs) and California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey).^{*} This number is derived from the student's score on the CST in English-language arts. The CRL does not apply to the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) or the Standards-Based Tests in Spanish (STS).

Is the CRL number related to grade level?

No. The CRL numbers, which range from 01 to 13+, correspond to each of thirteen book lists on the Web site. The numbers indicate a progression in the level of difficulty of the reading selections, with CRL 01 indicating the easiest to read books and CRL 13+ indicating the most difficult texts. Multiple book lists are available for each grade level.

Where is the CRL on the Internet?

The CRL can be accessed only on the Internet at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp>. The specific list for a student and other information about the books on this list (e.g., author, classification, summary) can be viewed on or printed from this site.

How do teachers and parents or guardians know which list is appropriate for their students?

When teachers, parents, or guardians access the CRL, they first are prompted to identify their student's grade level. Next, the CRL number from the STAR Student Report is selected. With these two pieces of information, a list of books that match a student's grade and CRL number is produced. Words or phrases also can be entered in the Keywords box to narrow the search.

^{*}The CAT/6 Survey is given in grades three and seven only.

How can the CRL help students at all grade levels?

Once a list of books is produced, a teacher and parent or guardian can click on the book title to find more information about each book. The information includes the type of book, its availability (i.e., in or out of print), and a brief description of the content. Some books are designated as NP. This designation means that at least half of the book is comprised of nonstandard prose. Some examples are poems, plays, songs, and books with incorrect or missing punctuation.

All of this information is prepared to help families decide which books on the list may be appropriate for their students. In making this decision, parents or guardians should take into account their student's interests, independent reading ability, motivation, and level of maturity.

Reading and literacy skills are keys to lifelong learning. The more students read, the better readers they become and the better they perform in school. The CRL helps determine which books may be appropriate for students to read outside of school. Parents or guardians can help their students become better readers by encouraging them to read as much as possible.

Can parents or guardians use the information on the CRL site without their student's STAR Student Report?

Yes. It is recommended, however, that parents or guardians work with their student's teacher(s) to help determine the appropriate list for each student.

Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms for Assessment and Accountability

API — Academic Performance Index

The API is a state requirement under the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999. The API is a single number that ranges from 200 to 1000 and indicates how well a school performs academically from year to year. A complete explanation of all API criteria is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>.

AYP — Adequate Yearly Progress

AYP is a requirement under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Under the NCLB criteria, schools and local educational agencies (i.e., school districts, county offices of education, and independent charters) must annually meet or exceed specified criteria in order to make AYP. A complete explanation of all AYP criteria is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/>.

Apr enda 3 — Apr enda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición

A designated primary language test for the STAR Program, the Apr enda 3 is a norm-referenced achievement test series in Spanish for Spanish-speaking English learners in grades five through eleven (in 2007). The tests measure the achievement of general academic knowledge in reading, language, spelling, and mathematics in Spanish. The scores reported compare each student's score to the scores of a national sample of Spanish-speaking English learners.

CAT/6 Survey — California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey

The CAT/6 Survey, administered in grades three and seven only, is a set of nationally norm-referenced tests that measure the achievement of general academic knowledge and provide national comparisons.

CAPA — California Alternate Performance Assessment

The CAPA is an alternate test, aligned to selected state content standards in English-language arts and mathematics, that is given to students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications.

CDE — California Department of Education

The CDE provides leadership, assistance, oversight, and resources to local education agencies to create a dynamic, world-class education system that equips all students with the knowledge and skills to meet world-class standards and excel in college and careers. Directing the CDE is the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), who is elected statewide.

CAHSEE — California High School Exit Examination

The CAHSEE, authorized by state law, is a standards-based test in English-language arts and mathematics that students must pass in order to receive a high school diploma.

CRL — California Reading List

The CRL is a Web-based tool that allows students and their teachers and parents or guardians to access a list of book titles organized by levels of difficulty. The CRL number found on each student's report is based on results of the CST in English-language arts.

CSTs — California Standards Tests

The CSTs are the primary component of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. These tests were developed exclusively for California's public schools to determine how well students are achieving state-adopted content standards in English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science.

SBE — California State Board of Education

Authorized by law, the SBE is the governing and policy-making body of the California Department of Education. The SBE sets education policy for kindergarten through grade twelve in the areas of standards, instructional materials, assessment, and accountability. The SBE adopts textbooks for grades kindergarten through grade eight, adopts regulations to implement legislation, and has the authority to grant waivers of the *Education Code*. The SBE has 11 members, appointed by the Governor.

CSU — California State University

Authorized by law, the CSU is one of two public university systems in the state. The other system is the University of California. The CSU system includes 25 campuses located throughout California and the California Maritime Academy.

DPLT — Designated Primary Language Test

The DPLTs, designated by the SBE, are achievement tests in reading-language arts and mathematics that are given in Spanish to eligible Spanish-speaking English learners.

EAP — Early Assessment Program

The EAP, aligned to required competencies of incoming college freshmen and state content standards for kindergarten through grade twelve, may be taken by grade eleven students to earn an exemption from CSU-required English and/or mathematics placement tests or to determine additional coursework needed to prepare for college-level courses.

EPT — English Placement Test

The EPT is the English placement test for the California State University system.

ELM — Entry Level Mathematics

The ELM is the mathematics placement test for the California State University system.

IEP — Individualized Education Program

Required by law, the IEP is a specific education plan that is developed by a school's IEP team, including the parents and guardians, for every student with disabilities.

NCLB — No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is a federal law enacted in January 2002 that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It mandates that all students (including students who are economically disadvantaged, are from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English proficiency) in all grades meet the state academic content standards for proficiency in English-language arts and mathematics by 2014. Schools must demonstrate “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) toward achieving that goal.

PSAA — Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999

The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 established California's state accountability system. Its primary goal is to help schools improve the academic achievement of all students. The cornerstone of the PSAA is the Academic Performance Index that measures the academic growth of schools each year and sets annual targets for that growth.

STAR — Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

Authorized by law until 2011, the STAR Program is administered annually to measure how well California public school students in grades two through eleven are learning the knowledge and skills of the state content standards for English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science. The STAR Program for 2007 has five components:

- California Standards Tests (CSTs)
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
- California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)
- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS)
- Aprenda, La prueba de logros en español, Tercera edición (Aprenda 3)

STS — Standards-based Tests in Spanish

A designated primary language test for the STAR Program, The STS are achievement tests in Spanish for English learners in grades two, three, and four (beginning in 2007). These tests are aligned to state content standards in reading-language arts and mathematics.